IAT 432

Studio Preparation Exercise #5: Engagement
This is the last studio preparation exercise.

Background
Engagement is concerned with the qualities of an experience that really pull people in. It is most noticeable when it is present and then something happens to disrupt the experience. Engagement has been broken and we become aware that we were engaged in some way.

In his book *Experience Design*, Shedoff (2001), presents five elements related to engagement.

Identity – a sense of authenticity is needed for identity and expression of the self. The sense of authenticity is often only noticed when it breaks down. If you identify with something (e.g., you're a Mac user or a PC user) and it breaks down, the authenticity of the experience of identity also breaks down.

Adaptivity – has to do with changing levels of difficulty, pace and movement (e.g., via personalization). Engagement is not about making things easy but about making things that can be experienced at many levels of skills and enjoyment. For example, a musical instrument is an adaptable interface which allows players to play a a range of levels of difficulty.

Narrative – has to do with telling a good story, with convincing characters, plot and suspense. Good narrative appears not only in fiction, but also in everyday life. A good marketing brochure has a narrative. When you tell a friend about an experience, the "telling" has a narrative which you compose.

Immersion – is the feeling of being wholly involved in something, with being taken over and transported to somewhere else. You can be immersed in a good conversion, a good book or a video game.

Flow – the sense of smooth movement, gradual transition from one state to another.

Taken from Benyon, Turner & Turner, *Designing Interactive Systems*, Pearson, 2005.

Assignment
Think about one of your favourite activities. It may be talking to a friend on the cellphone, driving your car, riding you mountain bike, going to a movie, shopping, or playing a video game. Using Shedoff's five elements related to engagement (above), analyze what it is about the activity that makes it engaging for you.

Write 1-2 pages about what it is about the activity that makes it engaging. Discuss all five of Shedoff's elements. Could it be more engaging if the design (e.g., of the cellphone, car, bike, movie, shops etc) were different?